

Isn't that some kind of Victorian?

Notes from Woody Minor tour of Alameda, August 11, 2007, Alameda Gold Coast area

Alameda was connected to Oakland by land. As of 1860, Alameda had about 500 people, all farmers.

Rail came in 1864, 5 years before transcontinental rail. Alameda rail connected it to SF via ferries. Franklin Park area attracted professionals and is known as the gold coast. They could get to work in downtown SF in an hour.

Victorian houses were built to about 1900 and fell out of fashion. Many were stuccoed over, remodeled, or torn down and replaced by ugly apartments. In the 1970s a movement to save them, Measure A, passed and has protected them since then.

The Victorians were built by master builders who were excellent designers and called themselves architects.

Two major historical design themes combined in the Victorians, the Classical and the Colonial Revival.

The Classical went back to Roman times, and influenced especially the Italianate style. The major classical style was known as Queen Anne and peaked from 1889 to 1893 and was gone by 1896. (Other sources say 1860 to 1900.) Queen Annes are ornamented and picturesque, engaging the eye. They feature bay windows, towers, gables, porches, balconies, porticos, balustrades, fancy shingles, spindles and other decoratives, cornices, brackets (also called corbels), and dentils, multi-paned windows, and asymmetry. They have nothing to do with the real Queen Anne or her period (1702-1714). In the San Francisco Bay Area, wood was the dominant building material, while brick was used in the East and England.

Colonial Revival, which drew on Georgian Colonial, simplified the structure, had more symmetry, rectangularity, reduced structural projections, and reduced the ornamentation. It is still decorated enough to be "Victorian."

The shingle and stick styles are variations on Queen Annes that came later in the period.

#2, 1417 San Antonio, is a Queen Anne built by A. W. Potami in 1886, one of dozens he built during this period. The surface is broken up and less symmetrical. Fishscale shingles on the second floor create ornamentation. The prominent second floor oriel window wall continues to the gable wall. The windows have little square windows around the outside of top windows. There is a jagged busy roof. The relation between the roof and the second floor is unusual, in that the roof seems lowered into the second floor, reducing ceiling height around the outside. If you can imagine the roof rising up, the cornice returns of the gable would then line up with the cornice across the top of the windows, and, rising still further, would move the bottom of the gable up where it belongs, above the windows at ceiling height.

The Queen Anne style was followed by the Colonial Revival style which peaked in the 1900s. Colonial Revival featured simplified and more symmetrical forms.

#1 ??? San Antonio, also built by Potami, came later, in 1898. It has a low pitched, hipped roof with a dormer window and unusual chimney built into the dormer on one side. The upper

windows are smaller and have leaded glass in a lattice of panes which are not easy to see in the picture unless enlarged. The upper windows appear to be double hung in spite of being different sizes. The main bay window and the upper leaded window appear fixed, with casement windows on the side bays. The siding is all rectangular shingles, with one exception. The bottom of the second floor protrudes over the first floor, with a slight curve at the drip line, called a skirt. The two lowest rows of shingles have a special small zigzag notching along the bottom.

#4-7, 1602 San Antonio, is a Queen Anne built by Charles Shomer in 1889 with square bay windows and segmented window hoods. It has elements of stick style evident in the batten friezes, the panels above the windows. The friezes have two kinds of sawn, or jigsaw cut, decorations, called fretwork, one painted dark between the brackets under the cornice, and one painted white above the windows between the bracket extensions. The porch arch is supported by complex columns with free-form capitals. The diagonal bay over the entry is an oriel window because it sticks out from the main wall. The gable cornice is topped by a finial above and a pendant (also called a drop) below. On the left is visible just a bit of a horseshoe arch to a back porch.

#8 1717 San Antonio, a yellow stick style from 1882 features small roof-style window hoods and elegant braces with pendants in the gable and portico. Stick is evident in the batten board siding (vertical side boards with lath strips) under the gable that extend down to mid floor. The siding has a mid-floor horizontal valence trim with scalloped bottom. The horizontal siding is channel rustic, typically 8.5 inches wide. At the floor break is a trim course on top of siding to shed water, with a larger "watertable" course at first floor level.

The first sewer and water came to Alameda in 1887, and it may be that initially, or to retrofit, pipes were put on the outside.

#9-10 is an 1887 Queen Anne with pipes on the outside. It is typical, with a half-floor straight stairway with newel posts and balustrade going to a porch on one side and a diagonal bay on the other extending up two floors. The bay window skirt is separate from the skirt between the porch and the balcony. The vertical spindle decor across the top of the porch are called spandrels. A gable with decorated cornices, brackets, dentils, and fancy gable window are typical. The mix of fishscale shingles and channel rustic siding is typical. The fancy balcony with an arch, several turned columns, spindle work and bracket extensions is unusual. The impressive double paneled doors, door windows with curved corners, stained glass, and a transom with a large pane surrounded by small panes are unusual for a house this small. I could not find a term of art for multi-light windows where smaller panes are around or on one side of a larger pane.

#11 1729 San Antonio: Italianate built in 1870s. Note that Italianate is used here in a narrow San Francisco context and is used elsewhere with different meanings. The bay is not a slanted bay, but 5 sided polygon typical of Italianate, along with colonettes on bay windows, high double hung windows, prominent projecting cornices and fancy brackets, and window panels, the upper frieze having a three bullet ornamentation and the lower, a sawn decorative. The wall windows have a uniform trim style painted to feature a small box in an arch.

#12-13 1024 Union St. is a fancier than average Queen Anne, with a wrap-around porch with

bracket-supported arches, turned spindles, turned columns, cornice with small brackets, and dentils. This treatment is repeated in the balcony on front left and the mini-balcony on the side. The balustrade on the porch and steps is also fancier than usual, with a bottom railing, a row of small arches and posts, a row of spindles, and a top railing, with a turnout into the newel post. This motif is echoed in a small way in the low row of small arches on the tops of the two balcony walls. Between the top of the first floor windows and the bottom of the second floor windows is a continuous skirt (wall with a sloped out curve) with fishscale shingles and valence trim above and below. This skirt, starting from the right, is between windows, then a porch wall, then part of the main wall, then a porch wall again, and finally part of the main wall on the far left. The porch portico has a pediment with stucco ornamentation in the gable featuring raised circles in the middle and a rough surface right and left. This stucco decorative is repeated in the high gable on either side of the king post. The slanted bay windows, rather than being continuous to the roof, have a top that continues across to the porch on the first floor and a cornice that crosses to the porch on the second floor. While the porch has the same support structure, its roof changes from being under the upper balcony in the center to have its own roof on the left. The gable is especially elaborate, with a cross gable cornice with brackets, final and king post, dentils, a fancy arched, multi-light window with extra side trim boards, fishscale shingles, and full cornice around the whole gable. The extra side trim boards are repeated on other windows. The siding has a wall with alternating square and fishscale shingles and sawn decorative around the fixed wall windows (second floor side, porch, and basement). The front door is a six-panel wood door with a round window. Notice the use of lilac highlighting on the panels above the windows, below the gable, and below the porch dentils. The effect is both elaborate due to the complexity of the structure, and coherent, due to the repetition of design elements.

#14 to 18. This row of similar mid-scale Queen Annes was built as a subdivision by Joseph Leonard, who built many more houses in Alameda. His mass production cut costs and prices by half. They have a uniformity of structure and variation of detail. They all have dominant forward component with a slanted bay window with a full second floor above, and a narrower set-back component with a porch. In one case the protruding corners of the second floor over the bay corners are supported by brackets with a quarter sunburst; in another, by corbels; in another, not supported at all; and finally, one has a large single side bracket with a circle and cross filling. Three have skirts, each different form the others, and one does not. The gabled porch roof may be set back and small like the structure behind, or brought forward of the bay and widened to include the slant on the bay. The decorated gables may have a cross cornice or a fixed window; those with cornices may have a cornice return or full cornice. The siding mixes box, clipped, and fishscale shingles and channel rustic on upper walls and the usual channel rustic siding on the lower wall.

The original porches had a gabled pediment, arched entry with spindles, brackets and bracket extensions, and turned columns, some of which has been lost on some houses. The bigger porches have fancier arches and quarter sunbursts or a curves and scroll pattern with wavy wood symmetrically in the pediment left and right of a king post and, an entry with queen posts supporting a flat arch with turned spindles in the middle and a cross-spindle pattern on the sides. This house, #18, at 1820 and 1818 [San Antonio?] has been internally divided with a second door instead of a fixed window. The second door echos the paneling and lights of the first and fits almost seamlessly into the porch. The pattern of the window panes in the top central bay

window are echoed in the front door. This house also has an unusual shingling pattern second floor right, where notched shingles, one per row, drop below the square shingles and are offset from each other to form a curve.

#19 at 1834 ?? was built in 1892. It has a slanted bay with a fixed central window and a leaded stained glass upper pane. The balcony has a slanted bay skirt wall and round tower roof. The turned columns, brackets, and rail seem odd without the spindles that must have been there. The porch also seems stripped of original ornamentation, and a finial seems missing from the tower. Cement may have replaced wooden porch steps. The pipe railing by the porch steps probably replaced a wooden balustrade with newel posts. The two front doors are different, suggesting a remodeling dividing the house. The wide pediment has a large sawn decorative design of curlicues echoed in the gable above the cross gable cornice, but there is a different design in the panel decorative or cartouche to the right of paired windows above the porch. Also unusual is the dormer between the tower and the gable, and the curved oriel window on the left of the second floor. The fixed window on the porch has a arched top and latticed lights. The trim boards beside the windows provide some consistency.

#20 at 1829 ? is a classical colonial revival built in 1898. The style is simple and symmetrical, with a centered dormer, and three centered double hung windows on the second floor. The cornice is very prominent and has dentils underneath, but no brackets. There is a wide soffit (a cover from the wall siding to the roofline) with long rectangular panels outline with narrow white trim. Long rectangular friezes separated by a simple cornice span the building between the first and second floors. The siding is mostly channel rustic, without even corner boards. A recessed porch is supported by four round columns with Ionic capitals, while the front window is framed by three square trim columns with an almost Doric style capital. A little bit of Queen Anne sneaks into the turned supports of the porch balustrade and the capitals. This house is just a few elements away from not being a Victorian.

#21 at 1817 is a shingle style, with a skirt, unusual skirt on the cross gable, unusual bowed out wall and columns on a small gable balcony. There is a gable cornice with brackets and, below it, an elaborate frieze with a bullet center, four up and down connected spirals left and right, and a sawn and molded decorative in the remaining space. The protruding gable is supported by three single-covered brackets. The slanted bay is partly covered by a wide porch roof, covering a wrap around porch. The porch columns are heavily turned below and square above, with bracket extensions and brackets. The right side seems added later except for the porch supports, so perhaps it is only the fenestration on the second floor which has been altered. The modified arches on the left (behind the rose arch) and right suggest there might have been similar decorations on the rest of the porch.

#22 at 18xx is a single style with an unusual mid-level roof crossing from above the slanted bay on the right to the end of the wrap-around porch on the left. This roof is a straight line at the drip line, but the top molds back to a curved bay on the second floor, to a flat central wall with a sunburst and leaded window, and to the base of a hexagonal tower. The tower front wall continues flat across the main wall of the gable, so that the gable cornice is full length on the right, and half length on the left, ending where it reaches the tower. The tower has six pane

windows but the front has none, even though there is room for gable windows. The tower skirt has little brackets without a real cornice to support. The roof to the right is supported by simple brackets.

#23 at 1813 is structurally similar to #21, with a wrap-around porch, extended porch roof, and bay window. Special features are the three white sawn decoratives, one in the portico gable of a half sunburst with a bullet arch and a wavy surface, a sunburst in a rectangular panel between the second floor windows, and a curving design around the king post above the cross gable cornice. The main bay window has an arch window on top. The second floor corners are diagonal, with large shingle-covered brackets on the wide walls supporting the gable. The gable double window is arched and has a trim of a modified arch. The fixed window on the porch features three diamond lights. The porch columns combine a square base, a turned middle, and a square top with brackets.

#24 1893 ?. huge Colonial Revival

#25 899 Union St. Captain's Corner. (Woody Minor in front) Cross panel double wood doors. missing decor on balcony. Protrusion of upper gable upstages tower without providing living space. Gable below is already bracketed out from main wall. Curved porch, fancy supports. Round balcony on right seems to be missing a column or two, and lacks other trim. Balcony has witch's hat style roof (missing finial); round tower has bell style roof.

#27 896 Union

28 893 Union. Fancy spindle work. Central porch and balcony, slanted bay left and tower right.

#29 891 Union. Leonard's shingle-style mansion of 1895. Central porch and balcony; three story hexagon tower left and two story circular tower right.

#31 900 Grand. Pure Italianate: large cornices for roof and bay windows, fancy brackets with dentils and panels, fancy window surrounds, flat portico with balustrade on top. tall vertical double hung windows. About 1870, the first Victorian style.

#32 903 Union. Early stick style verticals in batten frieze under cornices of roof, windows, and porch. Built 1881. Small gables. Simplified from Queen Anne.

#33 shingle style, sawn decoratives on simple porch columns. Large gable with simple long brackets and protruding upper cross gable, large gable windows, oval fixed window on right. Round tower on left with no conical roof. Small balcony with curved wall over porch.

#34 917 Grand. A modest Palladian window in dormer. by Patania [?]

#35 921 Grand built in 1892. I have picture of two windows only. Note patterns that repeat, others that do not.

#36 1623 ? St. Queen Anne. Nice balance of details and simplicity. Orange and yellow colors somehow work; slate trim color helps. Bay gable seems to lack brackets and stick out too much. Complicated roof with bay window gable, three sided main gable oriel, half of a main gable, and a side-facing dormer. Nice scroll ornamental above top bay window with gold garland highlight. Bay gable window seems missing; boards do not look right. Arch top has out-sized keystone trim. Wide stairs on right obscured by bush and tree. Right side has fixed multi-pane diamond leaded window below and an oriel window above. by Patania [?]

#37-39 1616 \$ St. Built in 1894, Queen Anne. Unusual routed siding on first floor. Finished basement makes a three story four sided town with cone roof. Elaborate right side of big newels, turned balustrade, round columns with Ionic capitals, wood panel door with sunburst and bullets and large window, transom, fixed window, porch paneling, elaborate swirling floral frieze and close spacing of dentils on pediment, balustrade on balcony, slanted bay, and large, decorated gable echoing the pediment. I seem to have a continuing problem with how much gables stick out.

#40-41 1000 Paru. a McMansion from 1890. two kinds of brackets support large protruding gable. Strong linear, boxy trim indicates stick influence. Large decorated gable over porch. Unusual spears mounted on square porch columns.

#43 1004 Paru. Colonial revival with large Palladian window and multiple keystones and triumphal owl in decorative arch, dormer on hip roof, round bay window, large side entry.

#44 Built by Denke in 1889, small Queen Anne with large front bay. King post and pendant in gable. Pointed top window in gable. Stick style on porch and above.

#45 Classic Queen Anne, featuring sawn fretwork balusters, unusual arches and more sawn decoratives, and snowflakes on frieze above windows and porch. Stucco with rough surface in gable top.